

**ISRAELI DETERRENCE STRATEGY: GUARANTOR OF
SECURITY OR REGIONAL ENMITY?**

Michael Andrew Todd

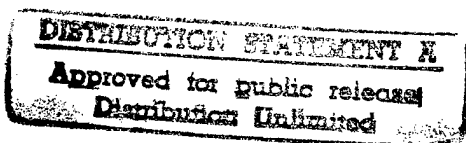
A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY
OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE
BY THE PROGRAM
IN NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

JANUARY 1998

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 3

19980122 059



1. Report Date (dd-mm-yy) JAN 1998		2. Report Type Master's thesis		3. Dates covered (from... to) MAY 1997 - JAN 1998		
4. Title & subtitle Israeli Deterrence strategy: Guarantor of Security or Regional Enmity				5a. Contract or Grant #		
				5b. Program Element #		
6. Author(s) Todd, Michael, A				5c. Project #		
				5d. Task #		
				5e. Work Unit #		
7. Performing Organization Name & Address				8. Performing Organization Report #		
9. Sponsoring/Monitoring Agency Name & Address Department of the Army U.S. Total Army Personnel Command Attn: TAPC-OPB-D 200 Stoval Street Alexandria VA 22332-0411				10. Monitor Acronym		
				11. Monitor Report #		
12. Distribution/Availability Statement Complete disclosure to the Public authorized						
13. Supplementary Notes						
14. Abstract Israeli security strategists have focussed upon deterrence as the tool to guarantee security. At times, deterrence has failed because these strategists have constructed deterrence based only on the military balance as they perceive it. Other factors that are not considered profoundly affect the credibility of the deterrent threat. This thesis examines this issue in the Arab-Israeli context and portubates the future nuclear Middle East.						
15. Subject Terms Rational Deterrence Theory, casus belli, psychological impediments to optimal information processing, fissile material						
Security Classification of				19. Limitation of Abstract	20. # of Pages	21. Responsible Person (Name and Telephone #)
16. Report	17. Abstract	18. This Page				
U	U	U	UL	113	Michael Todd (410) 754-8312	

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that Israel's reliance upon its military superiority to deter its adversaries has failed to guarantee the security of the state. This does not mean that deterrence strategy is useless or has not been beneficial to Israel. It is not, however, a remedy by itself to bring peace and security to the state. Violence begets more violence and other strategies used in concert with deterrence would be far more effective to reduce regional hostility than reliance upon deterrence alone.

Rational deterrence theorists argue that a potential challenger only has to consider the military balance to determine whether or not to attack the defender. Realistically, the decisions of policy-makers are affected by psychological processes and needs that tend to reduce the primacy of strictly empirical evaluations of the military balance. Were rational deterrence theorists correct, Israeli deterrence strategy would have been wholly successful in guaranteeing security. Since it has not, Israeli policy-makers need to understand the limitations of deterrence theory and pursue other strategies along diplomatic lines that will reduce regional tension and

enmity. Failure to follow such a course of action may have significant consequences for Israeli security in the near future. We will witness an expansion of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East that will make a precarious security situation even more dire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by thanking all the great soldiers and officers who have taught and taken care of me during my career. I would also like to thank the Army for sponsoring all of my collegiate education.

The staff and faculty of the NES department have aided me greatly in my transition from soldier to part-time academic. I would like to give special thanks to Professors Norman Itzkowitz and Heath Lowry for all their advice and gentle but firm guidance regarding completion of this project.

Finally, I want to thank my family, Corinna, Cole, Connor, and Michaela. As a military family, they are used to sacrifices which have continued here despite my being at home.

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Introduction

The prospects for peace looked promising after the Gulf War and seemed to improve after the signing of the Oslo Accords. The optimism generated by these events has dissipated due to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the election of a hard-line Likud government, and the stagnation of the Peace Process since this government has come to power. The atmosphere in the Middle East is, once again, becoming increasingly hostile. There are some policy-makers in Israel that view the peace process as a trap that will decrease Israel's security. They demand that Israel rely on its military strength to guarantee security and that the Arabs must agree to Israel's terms before peace can truly be realized.

Israel's military superiority has acted as a deterrent to its adversaries. It has prevented an all-out war with the objective to eradicate the existence of Israel. However, Israeli deterrence has not prevented challenges short of this objective, thus only partially providing security.

This essay will attempt to dispel the myth that a strong military and the resolve to employ it is sufficient

to guarantee security. Deterrence is but a component of an effective security policy. Israeli policy-makers must employ other strategies combined with deterrence to ensure its national security in the future.

This essay is divided into four chapters. The first addresses the debate between rational deterrence theorists and their detractors to illuminate the shortcomings inherent in deterrence theory. The second examines the genesis of Israeli deterrence strategy resulting from an internal political conflict in the first decade of Israel's existence. The outcome of this conflict had policy consequences that set the stage for deterrence failures discussed in the third chapter. The essay ends by recapping the shortcomings of Israeli deterrence strategy and discusses why it will be even less successful in the future than it has been in the past.

Chapter One: Deterrence Theory and Its Detractors

*"I am not entirely convinced that this distinction between theory and practice is an easy one to follow, because the theory and practice of deterrence have always been so closely intertwined."*¹

-Barry Buzan, a deterrence expert

Israel has constructed a formidable military machine and has demonstrated its ability to defeat the Arab armies decisively on the field of battle. Israel has maintained conventional superiority in order to dissuade its enemies from attacking it. Israel's conventional advantage constitutes its deterrence strategy to ensure national security until the Arabs are willing to discuss peace. Yitzhak Rabin clearly articulated this strategy saying that the IDF is designed for a "dual purpose: deterrence and, if deterrence fails, achievement of decisive victory."²

¹ Barry Buzan, "The Evolution of Deterrence Theory: Lessons for Israel," in **Deterrence in the Middle East: Where Theory and Practice Converge**, eds. Aharon Klieman and Ariel Levite. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 19.

²Yitzhak Rabin, "Deterrence in an Israeli Security Context," in **Deterrence in the Middle East: Where Theory and Practice Converge**, eds. Aharon Klieman and Ariel Levite. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 10.

Rabin envisioned a decisive victory that would compel the Arabs to negotiate for peace on Israel's terms.³ Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, shared a similar outlook, believing that only the successful use of force would induce the Arabs to acknowledge Israel's right to exist.⁴ The tendency to focus on a military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, either through deterrence in the first instance or active hostilities should deterrence fail, has become Israel's security policy as opposed to a component thereof.

Israeli policy-makers, however, have hoped to avert war and maintain the status quo by presenting a credible deterrent to their enemies. This hope raises the question of what comprises a credible deterrent. Rabin said that "the major test of Israel's defense policy [was] its ability to prevent hostilities by verbal deterrence" and that "an opponent has to bear in mind only one imperative: the risks it incurs in going to war against us."⁵ According to his statement, Israel's defense policy has failed in some instances to deter militarily inferior opponents.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Avi Shlaim, "Conflicting Approaches to Israel's Relations with the Arabs: Ben Gurion and Sharett, 1953-1956," in **The Conflict with the Arabs in Israeli Politics and Society**, ed. Ian S. Lustick. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 292.

This chapter will discuss deterrence theory, its detractors, and an alternative approach to building a credible deterrence posture. This discussion will provide the tools necessary to examine the evolution and limitations of deterrence application in the Israeli context.

Rational Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory became a focus of considerable attention shortly after the US dropped atomic bombs on Japan. It is a Western conception that evolved during the Cold War. The theory was conceived and applied by US policy makers to deal with the USSR in the bi-polar struggle for global hegemony.⁶

Rational deterrence theory assumes that the players are rational actors. Outcomes are dependent upon their evaluation of opportunities for all actors and the state makes decisions as if it were a single, rational actor. Rational actors are those who "have exogenously given preferences and choice options, and they seek to optimize preferences in light of other actor's preferences and

⁵ Rabin, 9.

⁶ Buzan, 20.

choice options."⁷ One can group rational actors into the categories of either the challenger or the defender. The defender desires to maintain the status quo while the challenger wants to change it through military means. In an effort to dissuade the challenger from attacking, the defender issues a threat to use military force against the challenger. Two unknowns for the challenger that must enter his calculations pertaining to his possible attack are the defender's capability and resolve to follow through with the threat. The challenger depends on his perceptions and intelligence gathering mechanisms to quantify these unknowns.

The credibility of the defender's deterrence strategy lies within the challenger's perceptions. Achen and Snidal describe the challenger's dilemma by saying, "The trick is to learn the likelihood that the rival country will fight- and if it fights, how likely it is to win."⁸ If the challenger believes that the defender's capacity to back up the threat is low, then he challenges the status quo. If, on the other hand, he determines that it is high, then the challenger conducts a cost/benefit analysis of attacking.

⁷ Christopher Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," in **World Politics** vol. 41, no.2 (January 1989), 150.

⁸ Ibid, 149.

He evaluates the balance of military forces and subjectively determines whether he will realize gains or suffer losses. If his calculations result in a net gain, he will attack. He will refrain if the result is a net loss. The above-mentioned process of calculation and decision is dependent upon the challenger as a rational actor. Conversely, a challenger that attacks despite a calculated result against such action is, by default, irrational.⁹

In the Cold War context, deterrence worked quite well. It owed its success to the destructive capability of nuclear weapons. The US wanted to convince the Soviets that the costs associated with nuclear retaliation would far outweigh any possible benefits from using nukes in a first strike. The frightening specter of a retaliatory attack for a nuclear first strike would blur the distinction between victory and defeat for either side. In this scenario, the incurred costs of a first strike would far outweigh the possible benefits. Thus, the incentive to attack in a nuclear setting was reduced to an extremely low level, although probably not negated altogether.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid, 150-2.

¹⁰ Buzan, 26.

Applying Cold War deterrence theory is somewhat problematic in the conventional setting. Deterrence in a conventional atmosphere is complicated by the relatively weak destructive capacity of conventional weapons compared to nuclear weapons. Challenging an adversary's deterrent in the conventional setting does not pose the disastrous potential consequences found in a Cold War nuclear environment. The reason for this distinction is that deterrence in the conventional setting is geared more towards denial than towards punishment. Punishment is defined as strikes against the adversary's population. Denial means that the defender will deny the challenger's military the ability to attain its objectives as well as impose some costs such as destroying the adversary's armed forces, all of which outweigh possible benefits.¹¹

A word of caution is in order here. Punishment and denial are not concepts strictly limited to either conventional or nuclear deterrence. Punishment can occur in the conventional setting. During the War of Attrition, the Israelis decided to conduct deep penetration raids against ostensibly military targets to demonstrate the impotence of the Nasser regime. Israeli planners hoped

¹¹ Yair Evron, **Israel's Nuclear Dilemma** (London: Routledge, 1994), 38.

that Egyptian public opinion would turn against Nasser and lead to the downfall of his government.¹² Denial in a nuclear scenario could take the form of using tactical nuclear weapons to deny the enemy the ability to use his lines of communications, certain terrain, or part of his armed forces. However, we can generally associate the concept of denial with conventional deterrence and punishment with nuclear deterrence.¹³

Theorists have also split deterrence into categories of general and specific. General deterrence occurs when two states in a region have an adversarial relationship and one state, the challenger, is suspected of wanting to alter the status quo through use of its military forces. The defender maintains its own military forces at a level that it believes will deny its adversary its objectives. General deterrence occurs during a period in which there is the lack of an imminent threat.¹⁴ However, a situation necessitating a transition from a general deterrence

¹² Avi Shlaim and Raymond Tanter, "Decision Process, Choice, and Consequences: Israel's Deep-Penetration Bombing in Egypt, 1970," in **Arab-Israeli Relations in World Politics**, ed. Ian S. Lustick. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1994), 290.

¹³ Evron, 38, 281.

¹⁴ Bruce Russett, "Between General and Immediate Deterrence," in **Deterrence in the Middle East: Where Theory and Practice**

posture to a specific deterrence posture denotes failure of general deterrence.¹⁵

Specific deterrence refers to a situation in which one side perceives its adversary is taking actions that constitute an immediate threat to its interests - thereby creating a crisis situation. The threatened party then issues a specific threat to dissuade its adversary from taking a certain action.¹⁶ In the Arab-Israeli case, the Israelis articulate "red lines", the violation of which constitute a casus belli resulting in Israeli leaders implementing their military options. An excellent example was the situation prior to the Six Day War. One "red line" that the Israelis articulated to the Egyptians was that any attempt by Egypt to seize the Straits of Tiran would constitute a casus belli. When Nasser directly threatened the Israeli economy by preventing ships destined for Israel from using the Straits, he challenged Israel's explicit threat of response.

In some instances, however, the specific threat is inferred rather than explicitly issued. Again from the

Converge, eds. Aharon Klieman and Ariel Levite. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 35.

¹⁵ Robert Jervis, "Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence," **World Politics** vol.41 no.2 (January 1989): 194.

¹⁶ Russett, 35.

1967 War, Egypt and Israel had an understanding that the Sinai was in effect a demilitarized zone based on the tense situation that had arisen between Israel and Egypt in 1960. Infiltrators had crossed into Israel and committed acts that elicited the launch of a reprisal raid on the Syrian border by Israel. Keeping in mind that Egypt and Syria had merged to create the short-lived United Arab Republic, Egypt responded to the Israeli raid by moving troops into the immediate vicinity of the Israeli-Sinai border. International mediation was necessary to prevent the situation from escalating into full-scale hostilities. Mediators eased the tension by securing the withdrawal of Egyptian forces and demobilization of the recently mobilized Israeli reserves. The key component derived from this case pertaining to specific deterrence is that there was a precedent created in the Egyptian-Israeli struggle of threat and response. Egyptian massing of forces in the Sinai resulted in Israeli mobilization of reserves as a prelude to war.¹⁷

When Nasser demanded that UN Secretary General U Thant withdraw the United Nations Expeditionary Forces from the Sinai and proceeded to remilitarize the Sinai with Egyptian

¹⁷ Dan Horowitz, "The Israeli Concept of National Security," in **National Security and Democracy in Israel**, ed. Avner

forces, he had challenged an Israeli "red line". Israel did not have to declare openly that it would view the Egyptian remilitarization of the Sinai as constituting a casus belli. The fact was established in 1960 and Egypt could infer that similar action would entail a similar response.

Deterrence Theory Detractors

Opponents maintain that rational deterrence theory is a poor predictor of state behavior because it relies on unrealistic assumptions that rarely, if ever, become manifest in the real world. States that stake their security postures on the efficacy of deterrence theory in application have experienced rude awakenings due to the inherent shortcomings of the theory. The critics point to these historical cases of deterrence failures as proof of deterrence theory's limited utility for policy-makers.

Defenders of the theory counter that the failures of deterrence are not failures of deterrence theory per se. Achen and Snidal declare that some challengers are just not deterrable.¹⁸ The inference of this statement is that the

Yaniv. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 22.

¹⁸ Achen and Snidal, 152.

challengers who attack in a situation in which cost/benefit calculations result in a utility less than zero are irrational.¹⁹ This simple dismissal of actors as non-rational to explain deterrence failures is convenient for defenders of deterrence theory, but a major problem for those attempting to construct a credible deterrence strategy.

One of rational deterrence theory's basic tenets is that the actors maximize utility. This tenet limits the utility of the actor to a simple cost/benefit calculation that determines whether to attack or not. If the result of the challenger's calculations demonstrates that the defender's capacity to fight and win are likely, then the rational challenger would choose not to attack. Choice, however, is not limited to attack or not. The challenger has options within the attack decision from which to choose. He does not have to commit himself to conduct an all out offensive against the defender. His objective in attacking may be quite narrow in scope and pose no existential threat to the defender. The challenger can tailor his attack to take advantage of his military's relative strengths while diminishing the negative effects

¹⁹ Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter," in **World**

of his relative weaknesses. He can conduct the attack in such a manner that will give him a positive utility even though the defender's military forces are superior. The deterrence strategy of the defender then has achieved partial success. His strategy probably dissuaded the challenger from pursuing a riskier option. The strategy, however, was also a partial failure because it did not prevent an attack from happening in the first place.²⁰

Defenders that have superior military capabilities can get themselves into trouble by assuming that their strength limits or dictates the options available to their inferior adversaries. If the inferior party does not like the options allowed by the superior opponent, then it may find a way to modify its options and achieve outcomes in its favor.²¹

Taking utility one step further, a challenger can attack even if the results of the cost/benefit calculations of his best choice within the attack dimension result in a utility that is less than zero. A possible scenario deals with the challenger's assessment that the status quo is

Politics vol. XLI, no.2 (January 1989), 211.

²⁰ Alexander George and Richard Smoke, "Deterrence and Foreign Policy," in **World Politics** vol.41, no.2 (1989), 173.

²¹ Zeev Maoz, "Power, Capabilities, and Paradoxical Conflict Outcomes," in **World Politics** vol.41, no.2 (1989), 246.

unbearable. The rational challenger calculates that the perpetuation of the status quo will continue to increase the costs of a future attack. Should he determine that the result net losses later are more than the current net losses, he may feel compelled to attack in the present. For him, it becomes a case of now or never.²² Additionally, he may assess that the mere attack in itself will disrupt the status quo in his favor whether he wins or not. He may estimate or expect international intervention before the conflict spins out of control and he suffers extremely high losses. In the preceding scenarios, the actors are clearly rational and have accepted a degree of risk in arriving at their decisions to attack. The actions, however, may appear irrational on the surface if we fail to understand the options available to the challenger.

Now we arrive at the most intensive criticism of rational deterrence theory. It, like other deductive theories, entirely leaves out relevant variables like psychological impediments to optimal information processing, misperception and miscalculation of opponent's intentions, and domestic political constraints from consideration.²³ Achen and Snidal's assumptions

²² Jervis, 190-1.

²³ George and Smoke, 178.

"temporarily suspend" these types of variables when analyzing the situation.²⁴ People are much more complex and less mechanical than the theory assumes. For those who are constructing deterrence strategy in the real world, suspending analysis of these variables could prove disastrous.

Jervis separates the psychological impediments into cognitive limitations on information processing and "motivated biases". Cognitive limitations come from the individual's inability to digest all the information available. To cope with this inability, individuals take "short-cuts" in their cognitive processes to reach decisions. From analysis of historical case studies of deterrence failures, Jervis derives the following generalizations:

1. People have a tendency to make new information fit into theories that they already know instead of trying to figure out another framework for analyzing the new data;
2. Recent historical experiences strongly influence the current set of beliefs that a person may hold;

²⁴ Achen and Snidal, 150.

3. Accidents and confusion may occur on our side but our adversaries have more control over events--an "accident" cleverly hides malicious intent;
4. People make decisions based predominately on one value that is most important to them; and
5. We tend use our own situation and position as a reference to judge what the other should do.²⁵

Jervis's "motivated" biases are those "deviations from what is usually considered rationality that stem not from purely cognitive limitations, but from psychological pressures and needs."²⁶ These pressures and needs tend to reinforce the cognitive biases discussed above. They may also make a statesman exaggerate chances of policy success when faced with great odds, feel that other countries should share his belief that his country is good and non-threatening to them, and minimize certain costs that he prefers not to face.²⁷ The biases that a statesman carries into his decision-making process form an "attitudinal prism" through which information must filter and which becomes distorted.²⁸

²⁵ Jervis, 196.

²⁶ Ibid, 196-7.

²⁷ Ibid, 197.

²⁸ Michael Brecher, **Decisions in Crisis: Israel, 1967 and 1973** (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 37.

Misperception and miscalculation of opponents intentions are variables that clearly occur in real world scenarios. Shimon Shamir defined these terms at a conference about the 1967 War in which many of the participants and observers of that war attended. He said that misperception deals with how an actor fails to view the other because of faulty communications, intelligence gathering, and/or the biases previously discussed. Miscalculation means that the actor made a decision to take action without correctly calculating the consequences.²⁹

Some deterrence theorists do believe that the third variable, domestic political constraints, is very important but it is too complicated to be accounted for as a variable in deterrence theory. There have been attempts at quantifying the effect of domestic political constraints, however, none have succeeded thus far.³⁰ This is an important point for those who construct deterrence strategy. Just because the theory cannot account for the variables does not mean that strategists can ignore them.

A final important aspect that rational deterrence theory fails to consider is the concept of spirals of

²⁹ Richard B. Parker, "Conclusions," in **The Six-Day War: A Retrospective**, ed. Richard B. Parker (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 314.

³⁰ Achen and Snidal, 154-5.

hostility. The defender can issue a threat that is counterproductive. It may provoke the challenger who perceives the threat as a challenge. He may, in turn issue a threat of his own back to the defender. This process can continue to escalate ending in full-scale hostilities, thereby having the opposite outcome desired by the original defender.³¹ I used original because situations arise in which the antagonists may not be able to distinguish between defender and challenger.³²

Obviously, deterrence theory has serious shortcomings in application. The theory that has been discussed in this chapter is termed "the weak version".³³ Detractors would like the theory to open up its assumptions to other possibilities to strengthen it as a prescriptive means for policy formulation. Whether a more robust theory that includes those variables previously discussed occurs in the future is irrelevant at present. It is imperative, however, that policy-makers understand these weaknesses when they attempt to construct a credible deterrence strategy. The current theory will not always predict a state's behavior because of its assumptions and should be

³¹ Jervis, 192.

³² Lebow and Stein, 221.

viewed in that perspective. Decision-makers must make every effort to separate the theory from deterrence strategy. Deterrence theory becomes dangerous when policy makers overinvest in it to ensure their security. What is needed is to combine deterrence with positive inducements to create a comprehensive foreign policy. Deterrence is a powerful component of foreign policy, but a poor substitute for it.

A question still remains unanswered. What do policy-makers do to augment "the weak version" of deterrence theory? Referring to the arguments of the detractors, it is necessary to analyze those variables that deterrence theory "temporarily suspends". The next section suggests such a method.

Constructing a Credible Deterrence Strategy

According to Yair Evron, building credible deterrence involves more than military superiority. One must analyze three critical balances in order to determine if the intended deterrent will be credible. These balances are of

³³ George Downs, "The Rational Deterrence Debate," in **World Politics** vol.41, no.2 (1989), 226.

military power, interests, and resolve.³⁴ In addressing the balances of interests and resolve, Evron incorporates variables that the detractors from the previous section claimed was missing from the rational deterrence model. Middle Eastern actors are not any less rational than Western actors. However, the development of the Middle Eastern political system makes these leaders bound to a high degree to domestic/regional constraints, replaces gain with need in some instances, and makes communications exceedingly difficult to decipher.³⁵

An assessment of the balance of military power includes an objective analysis of military capabilities as well as a determination of the adversaries' perception of that balance.³⁶ I break with Evron on one point here. An objective analysis of military capabilities connotes a focus on the quantitative aspect of these capabilities. There is, however, a qualitative aspect that demands a subjective analysis that is as important as the quantitative aspect. If one side of a conflict has five tanks while another has seven, then the side with the

³⁴ Evron, 36.

³⁵ Gabriel Ben-Dor, "Arab Rationality and Deterrence," in **Deterrence in the Middle East: Where Theory and Practice Converge**, eds. Aharon Klieman and Ariel Levite. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 95.

³⁶ Evron, 36.

greater number has an advantage. However, if these same five tanks were of the type M1A1 and the seven were of the type T-72, then a subjective analysis would probably find the smaller number having the advantage. This advantage is referred to as qualitative. In the Arab-Israeli context, Israel has held a qualitative edge over the Arabs in equipment and training while the Arabs have held the quantitative edge over the Israelis in raw numbers of equipment and soldiers.³⁷

Since the 1967 War, the Arab regimes have changed their outlook regarding Israel. The defeat inflicted by the Israelis in 1967 was totally humiliating and caused the Arab regimes adjacent to Israel to reassess their thinking of the Zionist entity. What had been a focus on Israel's existence has changed over time to the question of boundaries.³⁸ This change in focus and the limited military actions of these regimes, particularly those adjacent to Israel, gives us a clue as to the Arab perception of the balance of military power. Since the crushing reality of the Six Day War until the present in which the US has

³⁷ Anthony Cordesman, **Perilous Prospects: The Peace Process and the Arab-Israeli Military Balance** (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1996), 37, 76.

³⁸ Aaron Miller, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1987: A Retrospective," in **From Wars to Peace in the Arab-Israeli**

guaranteed to maintain Israel's qualitative edge, the Arabs have perceived that the balance of military power favors Israel.

The second component that a policy-maker should evaluate when building a credible deterrence strategy is balance of interests. Balance of interests involves an assessment of one's own interest on a particular issue as well as the interests of other parties. Balance of interests includes primary interests which are comprised of political and strategic interests and secondary interests such as prestige and credibility.

The third component for analysis is balance of resolve. This is simply an evaluation of each sides' determination to challenge the deterrent or follow through on the threat.³⁹

Israel has constructed its deterrence based solely on its assessment of the balance of military power to the exclusion of, or at least to the detriment to, assessments of the balances of resolve and interests. The Israeli concentration on the balance of military power has failed to ensure security for the state in a number of instances in its short history. In the next chapter, I will examine

Conflict 1969-1993, ed. Ian S. Lustick. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 221.

some of these instances and the evolution of deterrence strategy in the Israeli context using Evron's components of a credible deterrence strategy and criticisms of deterrence theory from this chapter.

³⁹ Evron, 37.

Chapter Two: Israel's Deterrence Strategy: Internal Conflict

*"For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."*¹

-Sun Tzu

In the previous chapter, I declared that the Israeli policy-makers have relied on the application of the "weak version" of deterrence theory to ensure the security of the state. I do not mean to imply that the Israeli government has been monolithic in advocating deterrence. On the contrary, the Israeli government has experienced serious political battles throughout its modern history that have stymied effective policy-making and been negatively influenced by bureaucratic bungling in policy implementation. There has, however, been a general security trend since the mid-1950's that focuses on deterrence. During the first few years of the state, a political schism developed between David Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister and holder of the defense portfolio, and

¹ Sun Tzu, **The Art of War**, trans. Samuel B. Griffith, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 77.

Moshe Sharett, the Foreign Minister. Animosity grew between them because of their opposing approaches to guerilla infiltrations emanating from Israel's adjacent neighbors. The difference between them was much larger than the issue of the raids and can be traced to the end of the 1948 War.

Ben-Gurion believed that Israel's efforts at peace following the war would be difficult because of the Arabs' profound shame over their defeat by such a small country. In his mind, Israel would necessarily have to maintain a large military force after the war to ensure the security of the state. Sharett, on the other hand, was convinced of Clausewitz's maxim that war was an extension of policy. Whereas Ben-Gurion focused on the military aspect as predominant, Sharett viewed it as a component of policy. He had become dismayed during the latter stages of the war with the concentration on finding a military solution to end the war instead of a political one.²

Before and even during the early stages of the 1948 War, Ben-Gurion and Sharett maintained a coalition because their objective was the same-the creation of a Jewish state. Once the state was established, their differences

surfaced and animosity arose between them. Ben-Gurion dominated because of his position and Sharett became the voice of opposition within the first cabinets.

The overall post-war geo-political environment placed Israel in a position in which security concerns dominated all others. Since its inception, Israelis believed that the very survival of their state remained threatened by its Arab neighbors. The peace negotiations that followed the final cease-fire of the 1948 War ended abysmally. None of the Arab countries came to terms and the threat of imminent hostilities permeated the atmosphere. Additionally, the Israeli leaders felt that they could not depend on external powers to assist in their defense. Concerns over security for the fledgling state could only be natural in such a setting.

Israel's elongated narrow shape exacerbated security worries. Israeli leaders felt that the state was very vulnerable because its 600 miles of borders made infiltration nearly impossible to prevent and made defense against an all out simultaneous Arab assault exceedingly difficult. The "thin middle" adjacent to the West Bank of the Jordan River was perceived as a tempting objective for

² Avi Shlaim, **Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdallah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine**

Jordan. It was only nine to fifteen miles wide with most of the urban centers located within artillery range of the border. Geographically, Jordan was positioned in such a manner that if it were to attack the "thin middle", Israel could be quickly divided. Jordanian forces would separate the Israeli industrial center in the vicinity of Tel Aviv from Jerusalem and/or the Galilee region.³ This hypothetical separation could cause insurmountable problems for Israeli command and control of its fighting forces.

Complicating security matters was the small population and resources of Israel in comparison with those of its Arab adversaries. Israel's population at the time of the armistice was 750,000, while its enemies stood at 30 million. Additionally, the Arabs' combined GNP was over seven times greater than Israel's.⁴ Staying power in a protracted conflict would heavily favor the Arabs. Israel was caught in a serious dilemma. Security in the future demanded a strong economic base so that it could have the ability to exploit resources commensurate with its enemies. Near term security demanded that it be able to ward off the various challenges posed by those same enemies. These

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 344.

³ Nadav Safran, **Israel: The Embattled Ally** (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), 224-7.

challenges ranged from another war with regular armies to low level guerilla operations launched from adjacent hostile countries across its lengthy borders.

To best deal with the near term and long term security predicaments, Israeli leaders decided to base a large part of their military capability on the mobilization of reserves. Ben-Gurion believed that a large force was necessary to ensure security, but a large standing military would drain resources necessary for the economic survival of the country. The reserves provided the state with the most flexibility to build the economy in times of relative peace and also the ability to transition to a state of war. Predicated on successful transition was a dependence upon early warning provided by the state's intelligence apparatus. Once intelligence had identified that the enemy had intentions to attack, the Israeli leadership would initiate an early mobilization of the reserves.

This early mobilization was imperative to achieve Ben Gurion's maxim of "bringing the war to the enemy". The lack of strategic depth necessitated an ability to seize the offensive when actual fighting began. If the intelligence warning was not in time to facilitate the mobilization of the reserves, then the regular units of the

⁴ Ibid, 225-6.

IDF had to absorb and contain the enemy attack while mobilization continued to proceed.⁵

Israeli planners had provided an answer for a regular war but Israeli leaders grappled with how to maintain Israeli security in the interim and how to deter a potential adversary from attacking. The cross border operations of guerilla units elicited two different responses from within the Israeli cabinet. Ben Gurion initiated a policy of reprisal raids into the neighboring Arab states. He believed that the Arabs only understood force and that it was necessary to demonstrate Israel's power and resolve to use it in order to deter the Arabs.⁶ One UN official commented that the raids were convenient for domestic political purposes, but "the policy was not effective in relation to its professed aim."⁷ Sharett, as Foreign Minister, did not dismiss retaliation, but advocated that a solution to the problem should not focus solely on showcasing military capabilities. He believed that such a policy created as much violence as it deterred. Sharett called for reprisals that were commensurate in intensity with the Arab incursions so as not to encourage

⁵ Horowitz, 20.

⁶ "Conflicting Approaches", 294-5.

⁷ Sydney D. Bailey, **Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process** (London: The MacMillan Press, LTD, 1990), 110.

the Arabs to become even more radical and deepen the enmity between the peoples. Sharett coined the terms "military school" corresponding to Ben Gurion's approach and "political school" analogous to his own views.⁸

Ben Gurion tried to enhance Israel's security posture with an unsuccessful attempt to entice the United States to station some units in Israel permanently as it did in West Germany. However, the Truman administration declined this request. This prospect faded entirely as relations with the US deteriorated when the Eisenhower administration ascended to power in 1953. The new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, wanted to change America's image in the Middle East and began the process of distancing the US from Israel. He hoped to convince the Arabs that the US was impartial towards the conflict.⁹ After his three week trip to the Middle East in May of 1953, Dulles said:

"The Israeli factor and the association of the United States in the minds of the people of the area with French and British colonial and imperialistic policies are millstones around our neck. Today the Arab people are afraid that the United States will back the new state of Israel in aggressive expansion. They are more fearful of Zionism than of Communism and they fear lest

⁸ "Conflicting Approaches", 294-5.

⁹ Isaac Alteras, "The Eisenhower Administration and the Arab-Israel Conflict: Attempts at Achieving Peace from 1953 to the Suez War," in **Arab-Israeli Relations in World Politics**, ed. Ian S. Lustick. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 3-4.

the United States become the backer of expansionist Zionism."¹⁰

In addition, he called for repatriation of some Palestinian refugees and the internationalization of Jerusalem.

The US posture was an anathema to the Israelis. They felt betrayed by Dulles' application of Realpolitik to their situation. Abba Eban, then Israeli Ambassador to the US, stated that, "Israel could no longer count on the United States for the protection of its interests because America was resolved, chiefly for Cold War purposes, to make a very strong bid for Arab support."¹¹ Dulles was concerned with the Soviet threat and felt that the Middle East could be a region that contained Soviet expansion. He failed, however, to convince the Arabs that such an alignment was in their interest. Responding to Dulles' suggestion for such an alignment, Nasser indicated that the methods of modern warfare reduced foreign aggression [nuclear powers] to a low level and that his security concerns were local.¹² The Arabs did not share America's

¹⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹¹ Abraham Ben-Zvi, **The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 34.

¹² Patrick Seale, **The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Politics, 1945-1958** (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 188.

zeal to confront Communism and perceived that Zionism was a greater threat.¹³

The US became increasingly critical of Israel in the second half of 1953. In July, Israel transferred the Foreign Ministry from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The United States denounced the Israeli move as provocative to the region. It also viewed the Israeli action as a continuation of Israeli practices during the 1948 War when Israel sought to create facts on the ground that international opinion would not be willing to change (fait accompli).¹⁴

US denunciations of Israeli retaliatory raids escalated in intensity after the Qibya raid conducted on October 15, 1953. The IDF executed a brutal retaliatory raid across the border into Jordan. The raid was punishment for a series of guerilla operations launched from Jordan. The last of these operations resulted in the deaths of a woman and her two children. Sharett was the acting Prime Minister while Ben Gurion was on retreat preparing for retirement from public life. Sharett vetoed unleashing the raid partly because he was against

¹³ Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., "Arabs, Israelis-and Americans: A Reconsideration," in **Arab-Israeli Relations in World Politics**, ed. Ian S. Lustick. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 22.

retaliatory raids which, according to him, just perpetuated the cycle of violence and stiffened the Arabs' resolve to fight. Additionally, the Israeli-Jordanian Mixed Armistice Commission explicitly blamed the Jordanians. Moreover, the commander of the Arab Legion, General John Glubb, announced his intention to capture the brigands. Sharett deplored the deaths of the innocent Israelis but was satisfied with gaining a political victory from the commission and a commitment from the Jordanians to pursue justice. However, the acting Defense Minister, Pinhas Lavon, ignored Sharett's veto, visited Ben-Gurion, and received his approval to conduct the operation. Israeli paratroopers and Commando Unit 101, commanded by Ariel Sharon, dynamited fifty homes in three villages with some residents still inside the houses resulting in over seventy civilian fatalities.¹⁵ The raid failed to compel Jordan to police its border better or to increase deterrence. Prior to the raid, Jordan made many arrests of persons trying to cross the border. One half of all male prisoners in Jordan were in jail for infiltration. After the raid, the Jordanian

¹⁴ Ben-Zvi, 38.

¹⁵ Gabriel Sheffer, **Moshe Sharett: Biography of a Political Moderate** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 684-5.

government changed its policy and even engaged in arming the civilians who were in close proximity to the border.¹⁶

Unfortunately for Sharett, another mishap occurred in the same time period. Israel had undertaken a project to divert some of the waters from the Jordan River to irrigate portions of the Negev desert. The Israelis decided to do the work in a demilitarized zone shared with the Syrians in the vicinity of the B'not Ya'acov bridge. The Israelis got the approval of General Roy Tillotson, the Acting Chairman of the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, to undertake the project. He stipulated to the Israelis that they could not conduct work on Syrian owned land nor adversely affect the Arab residents by disrupting their normal routines or preventing them from accessing the water.¹⁷

After the Israelis began work on the project, the Syrians protested to the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) that the Israelis had violated the provisions established by General Tillotson. General Vagn Bennike, the Chief-of-Staff of UNTSO investigated the matter and determined that the Israelis had misappropriated Syrian land for use in the project. He also ruled that the

¹⁶ Sydney D. Bailey, **Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process** (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1990), 110.

Israelis had to cease operations on the water project until Israel secured the Syrians approval to use its lands. Israel ignored his ruling and continued with the project.¹⁸

Israel's disregard for the Chief-of-Staff's ruling combined with the Qibya incident, was too much for the Eisenhower administration to just issue another condemnation. Instead, the administration decided to use coercive power to compel Israel to comply with the UN directive. The Eisenhower administration decided to withhold \$26 million in economic aid that the Israelis sorely needed. Finally, Israel acquiesced to the US demand and suspended all activities at the B'not Ya'acov site.

At the end of 1955, Ben-Gurion retired from public life to the kibbutz, Sdeh Boker, in the Negev. Sharett became the Prime Minister but he had to accept Lavon as Defense Minister and Moshe Dayan as the Chief-of-Staff in return for Ben-Gurion's blessing.¹⁹ Sharett was unable to control the defense establishment with these two men at the helm. Dayan, a disciple of Ben-Gurion, believed that another war with the Arabs was inevitable and that it was imperative that the Israelis choose the time of the war while Israel enjoyed a comparative advantage. He believed

¹⁷ Ben-Zvi, 39.

¹⁸ Ibid, 39-40.

that the time was propitious to engage the Arabs immediately while their regimes were not stable. The Free Officers had seized power in Egypt in 1952. Nasser then deposed of General Naguib in 1954, was elevated to head the group and was in the process of consolidating his position. Syria had suffered through a series of coups and King Hussein of Jordan, like the Egyptians, was trying to solidify his power base and establish himself as a legitimate Arab ruler. Dayan felt that the longer that Israel delayed the inevitable, the more likely the Arabs would provide a serious challenge to the IDF. He continued his mentor's policy of reprisals to provoke the Arabs into wartime posture by broadening the scope and intensity of the reprisals.²⁰

Even after Ben-Gurion retired, Dayan and Lavon continued to plan operations against the neighboring regimes. During the 1954-5 budget battles, Sharett proposed stiff cuts in the Defense budget. Dayan and Lavon countered this proposal by discussing their plans of "direct action" like removing the blockades of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal by force. Sharett and the rest of the cabinet were deadset against these risky initiatives that

¹⁹ Sheffer, 703.

²⁰ "Conflicting Approaches", 293-4.

would lead to war with Egypt. Dayan and Lavon went to visit Ben-Gurion and asked him to support their efforts to save the budget. Ben-Gurion began to get more involved in the government activities and increasingly critical of the Sharett approach.²¹

The US attempt at impartiality did not reinforce the legitimacy of Sharett's comprehensive approach to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict diplomatically. The US announced that it would drastically cut the allocation of funds earmarked for Israel in 1955 because Israel was "nearly at a stage in which it should be self-sufficient."²² Then, Assistant Secretary of State, Henry Byroade stated that the Israeli immigration policy was threatening to the Arabs. The Arabs believed that the land could only support so many people and that unlimited immigration meant future expansion.²³

Sharett responded by urging the US to help Israel by convincing the Arabs to moderate their anti-Israeli policies and statements, promote direct negotiations with Israel, and to commit to Israel's defense in the event of an all out Arab attack. Sharett exhorted the Western powers to partake in conflict management strategies which,

²¹ Sheffer, 714-5.

²² Alteras, 6.

if successful, would reduce Israel's need to rely on its military forces to ensure its security.²⁴ The US failed to respond appropriately to support Sharett. Instead, the US took measures that would continue to undermine Sharett's approach.

Another controversy rocked the Israeli cabinet in late 1954. Egypt arrested eleven local Jews for espionage and sabotage. The Egyptians eventually executed two of them and sentenced the rest to long prison terms. Israel responded to the arrests with indignation and a call to the international community to pressure Egypt to release these people. However, further investigation revealed that these people were recruited by Israeli intelligence in 1951 to constitute a spy ring and given the mission later to conduct sabotage operations against Western targets in Egypt. The objective of these operations was to exacerbate tensions between Egypt and the Western powers. There was also a question of Lavon's involvement and the incident became known as the Lavon Affair.²⁵

The Sharett government was deeply embarrassed over this situation. Additionally, Sharett found out not only that Lavon and Dayan had conducted operations without

²³ Ibid, 6-7.

²⁴ Sheffer, 732.

consulting him, but that Dayan would not even consult Lavon. The Defense Ministry was in a shambles and Sharett was forced to invite Ben-Gurion back into the government officially as the Defense Minister. The Sharett approach was losing steam and Ben-Gurion was determined to reinstitute the dominance of his views on security. He had written Sharett shortly before his return to the government that:

"our joint work back in the days of the Jewish Agency was a kind of coalition because we had different approaches. This coalition continues after the establishment of the state. I carried on despite the distance and difference of approaches, because I recognized the necessity and the value of the 'coalition'...I assumed that this coalition would continue after I left the Government. But it became evident that this was childish naivete on my part. I should have understood in advance that once I left the Government, this coalition would be over. Practically all the members of the Government share your approach and it is only natural that a clear line be carried out and announced...the line which you represent."²⁶

When he returned to government on February 22, 1955, Ben-Gurion informed Sharett that "although defense takes precedence over everything else, constant efforts must be made to attain peace."²⁷ This statement clearly articulates his desire to subordinate matters of policy to the

²⁵ Bailey, 114.

²⁶ "Conflicting Approaches", 296-7.

²⁷ Ibid, 298.

imperatives of defense upon which he embarked soon after his return.

Six days later, Ben-Gurion approved a Dayan planned retaliatory raid on a military camp in Gaza. The raid was so intense and destructive that Israeli isolation in the diplomatic arena increased and foiled Sharett's diplomatic initiatives. One such political project was secret diplomatic negotiations with the Egyptians. Another was talks with the United States in order to obtain an arms agreement and security guarantees. The raid also had a profound effect on changing the posture of Egypt.

Nasser claimed the raid changed the Egyptian focus from internal concerns to emphasis on Israel. According to Egyptian intelligence documents that the Israelis captured in 1956, the Egyptian government responded to the Israeli raid by discontinuing a policy of preventing Palestinians from Gaza to conduct cross border infiltrations—a policy that was definitely in the Israeli security interest. In an abrupt reorientation of policy, the Egyptians decided to use the fedayeen to attack into Israel and to escalate the involvement of the Egyptians in the Arab-Israeli conflict.²⁸

Sharett's vision continued to clash with Ben-Gurion's throughout his government and into the next in which Ben-

Gurion again became Prime Minister. The Ben-Gurion approach had overtaken Sharett's and increasingly pushed the other into the background. A final showdown between the conflicting approaches to security occurred in 1956. The catalyst was an emerging alliance with France worked out by the respective defense ministries. The problem with the alliance was that it entailed Israel's participation in an attack on Egypt.

Ben Gurion originally was lukewarm to the idea but two events changed his orientation. The Czechoslovakian arms deal with Egypt followed by America's refusal to enter an arms agreement with Israel, due to US consternation over another disproportionate retaliatory raid against Syria, strengthened Dayan's counsel for war at an advantageous time to Israel. The defense establishment considered that the armed forces expansion of Egypt and Syria into panzer type forces made Israel much more vulnerable. They began to doubt the feasibility of the reserve system to respond quickly enough to a mounted threat. The military strategists moved ever closer to a doctrine of first strike.²⁹ From the military's point of view, the American

²⁸ Ibid, 298-9.

²⁹ Safran, 238.

refusal to supply commensurate armaments forced them to search elsewhere for assistance.

However, the Eisenhower administration was still interested in diffusing the volatile situation and dispatched Robert Anderson to work out a solution to bring the principals together for direct talks. The mission ended in failure because Nasser refused a direct negotiation and persisted in his demand for unrealistic Israeli concessions. This failure coupled with the failure to secure an arms agreement with the US reaffirmed Ben-Gurion's conviction that Sharett's approach would doom Israel's future. The US refused to provide armaments even after the failure of Anderson's mission despite the clear asymmetry in military weapons procurements by both sides. The US wanted to rely on political pressure to restrain the Arabs.³⁰ This was totally unsatisfactory to Ben-Gurion. To unite his cabinet behind him, he forced Sharett to resign from the government and eliminated the primary opposition to the "military school" approach.³¹

The 1956 War that followed Sharett's resignation was not a war in which the Israelis had to react to enemy preparations and call-up the reserves. Israel struck

³⁰ Alderas, 15.

³¹ "Conflicting Approaches", 304-8.

first. Dayan's belief that Israel had to choose the time of battle coupled with the arms race rapidly introducing modern armaments into the region made the pre-1956 military plans a second best alternative.³² It was conceivable that its enemies could finish a decisive campaign before mobilization was complete. Therefore, the tendency to focus on the costs of not attacking first and the benefits of attacking changed Israel's concept of war. Israel could not afford to allow the enemy the initiative to attack. Its lack of strategic depth necessitated the new Israeli strategy that Yigal Allon termed "preemptive strike". An example of this strategy was formed by the air force in the 1960's. The air force strategists determined that it was preferable to destroy the enemy air capability on the ground rather than conduct dogfights to gain air superiority.

After the 1956 War, Israel became the de facto status quo power for the region. Therefore, all other countries became potential challengers. An arms race commenced at a feverish pace as the Soviets re-equipped the Egyptian army. Israel was forced to increase its armaments to continue to provide a credible deterrent to the Arab challengers. The problem for Israeli planners was defining what constituted

³² Safran, 239.

a challenge to deterrence necessitating response. The answer to this question became the "red lines" whether declared or inferred and the system of casus belli.³³

Israeli deterrence strategy as currently configured has really evolved since Moshe Sharett's resignation in 1956. US attempts to appear impartial in the region by distancing itself from Israel undermined Sharett's moderate approach and assisted in his downfall. The elimination of his approach to ensure Israeli security clarified the Israeli deterrence strategy and facilitated its evolution. The reliance on force or the threat of it became the Israeli security strategy. The issue on which strategists could now focus was maintaining the military edge to deter potential challengers-the "weak version" of deterrence theory. However, the triumphant approach would fail in some instances to guarantee the security of the state. In the next chapter, I will examine three such failures in 1967, 1973, and 1991 in detail to demonstrate some of the shortcomings of Israeli deterrence strategy.

³³ Horowitz, 20-21.

Chapter Three: Deterrence Failures: 1967, 1973, 1991

The ideological battle between the "military school" and the "political school" ended with the implementation of the "weak version" of deterrence theory to ensure Israeli security. This chapter will focus on deterrence failures that followed the resolution of this internal battle in 1967, 1973, and 1991. Determination of the root causes of these failures will demonstrate the necessity for Israeli policy-makers to consider variables "temporarily suspended" by rational deterrence theorists.

1967

Israel crushed its Arab opponents with a pre-emptive strike after Egypt had challenged two "red lines" thereby giving the Israelis casus belli. Egypt moved huge numbers of troops into the Sinai and then declared the Strait of Tiran closed to Israeli shipping. Nasser's goal was to achieve a political victory through a fait accompli that would repair Nasser's tarnished image and revive his status as the undisputed interlocuter of the Arab World.

The immediate prelude to the crisis began during the first week of May 1967. Palestinian guerillas with full support from the radical Syrian government launched more

sabotage operations into Israel that first week of May than they had conducted in all of April. On 12 May, a UPI reporter wrote the following report after an off-the-record press briefing:

"A high Israeli source said today Israel would take limited military action designed to topple the Damascus army regime if the Syrian terrorists continue sabotage raids inside Israel. Military observers said such an offensive would fall short of all-out war but would be mounted to deliver a telling blow against the Syrian government..."¹

The next day, the Soviets passed false intelligence to the Egyptians that claimed massive Israeli troop concentrations were forming on the border with Syria. Nasser and his associates believed that the Soviet report was credible. First, the Soviets were their superpower patron. Second, Israeli troop concentrations on the Syrian border appeared to be a logical progression to the recent situation of spiraling hostilities on the border.² Over the next few days, Egypt responded to the Israeli threat by invoking the Egyptian-Syrian defense agreement concluded in late 1966. It demanded the withdrawal of UNEF soldiers and concurrently deployed Egyptian forces to the former UNEF

¹ C. Earnest Dawn, "The Egyptian Remilitarization of Sinai," **Journal of Contemporary History** vol. 3, no. 3 (July 1968): 210.

² Richard B. Parker, **The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East** (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 3.

positions in the Sinai. A few days later, they announced the closure of the Strait and issued their own deterrent threat to Israel should it take military action against Syria. Even though Egypt had challenged the Israeli "red lines", Nasser maintained that Egypt would not fire the first shot.³ War became inevitable when Nasser announced the blockade. The question is why did Nasser force the Israelis hand? Did he expect to emerge victorious?

Balance of Forces

It is not really important to determine the exact force ratios. Suffice to say that quantitatively, the Arabs had the advantage. The overall assessment of participants and observers prior to the war, however, clearly gave the advantage to Israel.

The Israeli military was confident that it could defeat Egypt and some of the military leaders welcomed the opportunity to confront Egypt again in all-out war.⁴ Most US intelligence estimates concluded that the IDF would

³ Ibid, 49.

⁴ Richard B. Parker, "The June War: Whose Conspiracy?" **Journal of Palestine Studies** vol. 21, no. 4 (Summer 1992), 20.

dispense with the Arab forces in 5-7 days. Even the most conservative estimate did not surpass 10 days.⁵

The Arab perceptions are slightly more difficult to discern. In 1965, the Unified Arab Command submitted to Nasser and his Arab League associates an estimate of when the Arabs would achieve parity with Israel. The Command determined that the Arabs would not achieve the ability to fight Israel to a stalemate until 1970.⁶ By 1967, this estimate became overly optimistic since Egypt's leaders made the hard decision to cut the military budget due to economic woes. In addition, the best third of the Egyptian army was still fighting in Yemen with no discernable redeployment in sight.⁷

Nasser had continued to deny that the Arabs were prepared or able to confront Israel militarily throughout the decade after the Suez War. He even denied it as late as March 1967 in a press interview. However, he made an abrupt change of estimate in the Arabs' ability and claimed to be ready to fight only two months later. Janice Stein

⁵ Camille Mansour, **Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 86.

⁶ "Conclusions," 309.

⁷ L. Carl Brown, "Nasser and the June 1967 War: Plan or Improvisation?" in **Quest for Understanding: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Malcom H. Kerr**, eds. S. Seikaly, R. Baalbaki, and P. Dodd (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1991), 121.

proposes that Nasser revised his estimate because he had run out of diplomatic options by mid-May.⁸ According to the generalizations of Jervis, the pressures confronting leaders make them exaggerate chances of success or minimize the costs that they would prefer not to face. Perhaps, Nasser was only bluffing but the rational actor before May perceived the balance of military forces correctly.

Balance of Interests

Israel was the status quo power and was primarily focussed on maintaining the stable instability which existed in the region. When confronted with what it considered an unacceptable level of fedayeen operations, Israel consistently responded with force. Some of the reprisals were highly incommensurate with the original provocations and led to dangerous escalations of the level of hostilities. However, Israel generally remained consistent in its response to low level military actions. Despite some intermittent international haranguing over some of its retaliatory operations, Israel enjoyed a blossoming relationship with the US in the decade after the 1956 War. It also maintained good relations with the French and the British. The Kennedy administration

⁸ "Conclusions," 314.

increased the export of conventional armaments to Israel in the early 1960's. Kennedy hoped to assuage Israeli insecurity over the burgeoning regional arms race and convince the Israelis to delay their development of a nuclear capability.⁹ Within this generally positive international environment, Israeli interests demanded the maintenance of the status quo.

Nasser, on the other hand, had serious problems in the political/strategic realm and his image as the leader of Arab nationalism had suffered deterioration since the early 1960's. He had won a significant political victory in the 1956 War and his prestige increased when Syria and Egypt formed the UAR in 1958. However, Syria became increasingly disillusioned with Nasser's handling of the UAR and began to question his commitment to the Arab nation. Syria seceded from the UAR in 1961 and began to challenge Nasser's role as representative of Arab nationalism.

Nasser also had problems from the reactionary regimes in Jordan and Saudi Arabia over his involvement in Yemen. Nasser supported the republicans who seized power while the Saudis supported the royalist faction. No progress was

⁹ Douglas Little, "The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel, 1957-68," in **Arab-Israeli Relations in World Politics**, ed. Ian Lustick (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1994), 164.

made until 1964 when Nasser asked the Arab League to meet and discuss the situation in order to find a solution.

Saudia Arabia and Jordan welcomed the move partly due to their interests in Yemen. In addition, they were suffering as much as Egypt from the voluminous barrage of propaganda emanating from Syria. The Syrian Ba'thist regime excoriated the reactionaries and progressives who they considered to be soft on Zionism. The Arab League forum allowed Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to combine their energies to diffuse the negative propaganda.¹⁰

The thaw in relations between Nasser and the reactionary regimes only lasted until early 1966. Egypt refused its commitment to withdraw its soldiers from Yemen and the lack of progress quickly chilled relations. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia traveled around the Muslim World including a well-publicized visit to Iran to elicit support for an Islamic conference in Mecca. Nasser disliked the suggestion primarily because he considered Iran an imperialist proxy for Western interests so that they could maintain influence in the region.

Concurrent with this development was the announcement by Great Britain that it would withdraw its forces from the Aden Protectorate by 1968. Nasser conceived that this move

could only enhance his influence in the region if he prolonged Egypt's stay in Yemen. He made some inflammatory speeches, saying that Egypt would not leave the Yemen until possibly the next decade, and he attacked the Islamic summit indirectly by castigating Iran as existing to further imperialists' interests.¹¹

Jordan and Saudi Arabia retaliated and launched a vigorous propaganda campaign against Nasser regarding Yemen and Israel. Their derisive attacks pertaining to Israel aimed at portraying Nasser as afraid of the Israelis. They declared that Nasser had refused to confront the Israelis directly which called into question his commitment to Arab nationalism. They further claimed that he preferred to cower behind UNEF.¹²

Nasser was particularly vulnerable on this point. The Israelis made two stipulations when they agreed to withdraw from the Sinai in 1957. The first was that the US formally acknowledge Israel's right of passage through the Strait of Tiran. The second was that the UN deploy troops along the border as a buffer between Israel and Egypt.¹³ The Israelis

¹⁰ Dawn, 203.

¹¹ Tawfig Y. Hasou, **The Struggle for the Arab World: Egypt's Nasser and The Arab League** (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Inc, 1985), 152-3.

¹² Dawn, 204.

¹³ Little, 158.

went one step further regarding the UN troops. Israel refused to allow foreign troops on its soil, so all UNEF soldiers were deployed in the Sinai.¹⁴ This agreement effectively denied Egypt belligerency rights in the Strait of Tiran and gave the perception that the UN was protecting Egyptian forces from the Israelis.

Nasser's public image continued to deteriorate due to the adverse propaganda heaped upon him by his Arab challengers. Certain events occurred before May 1967 in which Egypt failed to react as other Arab states thought it should. His Arab challengers used Egypt's inaction to increase their media castigation of Nasser. Two of the most important of these events were the Samua and April 7 retaliatory raids. On 13 November 1966, the Israelis parachuted a unit into the Jordanian village of Samua to destroy some of the buildings in which fedayeen guerillas allegedly lived. The Jordanians responded and engaged the parachute unit. The Jordanians requested Egyptian assistance in accordance with Jordanian-Egyptian defense agreements. Egypt, however, declined the request and was excoriated for its timidity.¹⁵

¹⁴ Eric Hammel, **Six Days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 30.

¹⁵ Ibid, 21.

On 7 April 1967, Syrian mortars fired on an Israeli kibbutz. Units from the IDF responded and the skirmish escalated into an intense altercation that ended with an aerial dogfight. Israeli Mirage fighter-bombers pummeled Syrian positions, destroyed six MiG-21 interceptors, and pursued the remainder within sight of Damascus.¹⁶ This embarrassing brawl reverberated through the new pro-Nasser Syrian regime and threatened to topple it. However, the Egyptians decided not to intervene on this occasion despite a newly forged security arrangement with the Syrians. Jordanian radio immediately commenced to berate the Egyptians severely for failing their Arab brothers due to its fear of Israel. It also belittled the Syrian-Egyptian defense pact as a hollow agreement and indicative of the worthlessness of such agreements with Egypt.¹⁷

Nasser's decisions to demand the withdrawal of UNEF troops and remilitarize the Sinai must be understood within the context of its previous public humiliation by other Arab powers. That the Soviets sent the Egyptians an intelligence report that portended future doom for Syria only heightened Nasser's need to act decisively. However,

¹⁶ Ibid, 25.

¹⁷ Dawn, 207.

the remilitarization of the Sinai was not enough for Arab public opinion since Nasser had already done this before.

Nasser had remilitarized the Sinai in 1960. Egypt deployed forces after an Israeli retaliatory raid against Syria. The Israelis reacted to the deployment by initiating a partial mobilization—a marked increase in tensions to be sure, but not necessarily portending war. That crisis ended through diplomatic negotiation and Egypt had claimed another political victory.

The May 1967 deployment was measurably different. Egypt sent forces before the Israelis struck against Syria. Egypt issued its own deterrent threat towards Israel to prevent the expected retaliation. It appeared that the Israelis blinked and that the Egyptian deterrence might work. Egypt had clearly changed the rules of the game.¹⁸ Egypt's inter-Arab challengers, however, would not allow Nasser to stop at this act and interpreted it as a repeat of 1960.

Jordanian radio congratulated the Egyptians for their deploying into Sinai and dismissing UNEF, but continued to criticize the leadership for not also closing the Strait. The Israelis clearly articulated in public that this was a

"red line". The crossing of it would irreversibly change the nature of the conflict. Nasser, however, was under intense pressure to prove to all Arabs that he was still the legitimate representative of Arab nationalism. He had to go beyond previous commitments to overcome the doubt generated by his Arab rivals. Imposing a blockade in the Strait would accomplish his objective.

Balance of Resolve

Nasser perceived that once he announced the closure of the Strait of Tiran, war was inevitable.¹⁹ The question on his mind was not whether war would come. Rather, it was when would the US intervene to restrain its client? The Israelis would naturally follow through with their deterrent threat although Levi Eshkol seemed to display a lack of resolve in public speeches during the crisis. However, the crisis cabinet was announced with Moshe Dayan as Minister of Defense and Menachem Begin as Minister without portfolio. Once announced, any doubt about Israeli resolve was erased. Only Egypt rescinding its blockade of the Strait would avert war. This was, however,

¹⁸ L. Carl Brown, "Origins of the Crisis," in **The Six-Day War: A Retrospective**, ed. Richard B. Parker (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 62.

¹⁹ "Nasser and the June 1967 War," 137.

unthinkable. Only a return to the status quo ante 1956 would satisfy the Arabs and restore Egypt and Nasser to their previous lofty status within the Arab World.²⁰ Anything short of that would be viewed as an unmitigated failure and would result in Nasser's continued denigration at minimum--most likely something considerably worse.

The resolve on which Nasser targeted to save his skin was that of the US. Moshe Dayan believed that Nasser calculated that he could take steps beyond those of 1960 and achieve a political victory as he had done in 1956. The political victory would be assured by the intervention of the Great Powers who would pressure the parties to end the conflict before it got out of hand.²¹

This had been the Egyptian experience after 1948. The Great Powers through the UN would not punish the country that merely threatened war.²² In December 1949, the British representative to the UN said that the UN should "prevent whichever party was inferior in military strength from being driven into direct negotiations under duress." The Chinese representative further declared that "We (UN) can impose and we must impose peace, but we cannot impose a

²⁰ Ibid, 125.

²¹ Ibid, 130.

²² Dawn, 223.

particular settlement of the political situation in Palestine."²³

The US adopted these concepts as a basis for settling the situation in the aftermath of the 1956 War. Eisenhower acknowledged the Israeli grievances against Egypt, but he could not condone the use of force to change the status quo. Egypt's actions such as the blockade were violations, but they did not justify a military response. The US reiterated that all violations short of war had to be brought before the UN for litigation.²⁴

With a view through this historical lens, Nasser expected a similar Great Power response. DeGaulle had declared during the May crisis that whoever fired the first shot would not have French support. Nasser's miscalculation of Great Power resolve to constrain the combatants was "the outgrowth of a historically-conditioned view of regional and international politics."²⁵

I do not argue that Nasser was completely rational even considering his calculations of US involvement. At a certain point, the dynamics of the inter-Arab rivalry cornered him demanding a certain response. Nasser could not sidestep this pressure due to his own political

²³ Ibid, 214-5.

²⁴ Ibid, 215.

motivations. This event presented him with an opportunity to recover what he had lost in prestige and credibility with the Arab masses, and he considered that history was on his side. Nasser was guilty of using the recent past as a guide to his decision making without considering the changing nature of the US-Israeli relationship.

The Israeli deterrent failed to prevent the challenger from challenging the status quo in 1967. I believe that the balance of military forces was perceived similarly by all participants and observers. Nasser only relied on his armed forces to delay the Israelis long enough for Great Power intervention. His readiness to go to battle in May was a bluff to his enemies and a confidence builder for his own forces. What leader is going to initiate a provocation and publicly admit that his country is outmanned and outgunned?

At the conclusion of the Six Day War, Israeli leaders expected some of the Arabs to sue for peace. Moshe Dayan informed reporters that he was waiting by the phone for Cairo and Amman to call.²⁵ His long wait finally ended without success when the Egyptians initiated the War of Attrition. Dayan's faulty assessment is symptomatic of how

²⁵ "Nasser and the June 1967 War," 134.

²⁶ Safran, 257.

the Israeli leadership failed to understand the balances of interests and resolve on the Arab side and Nasser's perception of the US resolve to control its client. Instead, Israel attempted to deter its Arab challengers based on a favorable balance of military forces. Despite this military balance, however, Israel failed to present a credible deterrent.

The failure was due in part to the Israeli inability or unwillingness to pursue serious diplomatic initiatives during the decade between 1956 and 1967 with its Arab counterparts. The Arabs' hostility towards Israel did not dissipate during these years. It lurked in the background and would reemerge during the skirmishes associated with guerilla action and the Israeli retaliatory responses. Israel resigned itself to accept the stable instability in the region. All that the relatively latent hostility needed was a catalyst to explode. The seething political environment caused by the inter-Arab rivalry became that catalyst in 1967. A different reason caused the conflagration in 1973.

1973

In order to understand the causes of the 1973 War, it is necessary to first understand the postures of the sides

immediately after the Six Day War. The Israeli victory of 1967 was absolute and, more importantly, occurred without intervention from the Great Powers. So sudden and total was the victory that Israelis tended to attribute the Arab's defeat to cultural deficiencies that made them unable to grasp the intricacies of modern warfare.²⁷

The Israelis also tended to group all Arabs together into a neat little construct that we could possibly term as "the other". This other was homogenous in its hatred for Israelis and its objective was the eradication of Israel and reestablishment of Palestine. This construct dispenses with the dominant effect that inter-Arab rivalry had as a source of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The commitment of the Arab states to their Palestinian brothers was shallow. The plight of the Palestinians was convenient for their political purposes within the inter-Arab dynamic.

The Israelis failed to realize the true significance of the territories captured in 1967. The occupation of these territories had changed the very disposition of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict now transcended the Arab nations' lackluster commitment to the Palestinians.²⁸

²⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, **The Lessons of Modern War: Volume I: The Arab-Israeli Conflicts, 1973-1989** (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 17-19.

²⁸ Evron, 50.

Before the war, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan hid behind the Pan-Arab myth and gave the necessary lip service to the Palestinian cause in order to reap political benefits. After the war, the naked truth of their nationalist (Egyptian and Syrian) aspirations became apparent. For in 1967, they had lost land along with their credibility and prestige.

The loss of Palestine in 1948 was unfortunate, but initially not worth Egypt or Syria volunteering their regular forces to liberate it. They finally committed forces in order to restrain King Abdallah who aspired to incorporate Palestine within Transjordan.²⁹ If Israel were eliminated, then the victory would have been greater. However, thwarting Abdallah was victory enough.

The land lost in 1967 was different. The Sinai had been **Egyptian** land while the Golan Heights had been **Syrian**. Their grievance against Israel had become personal.

Balance of forces

The Israelis were very confident that their military superiority would translate into an effective deterrent to prevent an Arab attack. The total victory achieved by the IDF in 1967 clearly indicated that the military balance

strongly favored Israel. Additionally, the occupied lands provided Israel proper with strategic depth. This depth allowed the Israelis to dispense with the system of *casus belli*. Planners translated the depth to time and now felt comfortable that Israeli intelligence could provide adequate warning for reserve mobilization.³⁰ Considering the Arabs poor military performance, an Arab attack seemed remote. The War of Attrition did not dispel the notion of Israeli military superiority nor did it disprove the value of the territories providing strategic depth. It did temper Israeli military enthusiasm. Just because the Arabs were inferior militarily did not preclude them from trying to bleed the IDF and drain the Israeli economy. This war proved the efficacy of the Soviet supplied weapons especially the SAM air defense systems. These weapons, however, were deemed defensive in nature and the Soviets proved reluctant to provide offensive type weapons to their Arab clients.³¹

The Israelis misperceived the Arab desire to attack because of Egyptian military worries on the huge disparity

²⁹ **Collusion Across the Jordan**, 166, 193.

³⁰ Yigal Allon, "The Case for Defensible Borders," in **From Wars Towards Peace in the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1969-1993**, ed. Ian S. Lustick (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1994), 5-7.

³¹ Safran, 419.

between the opposing air forces. Military planners in the early 1970's declared that an attack against Israel was not feasible until Egypt closed this gap. The Israelis believed that this was not possible before 1975 despite the Libyan donation of sixteen Mirage fighters and increases in other Soviet armaments by mid-1973.³² Recent acquisition did not translate into immediate use. Required training time and equipment incorporation would prohibit effective use for a considerable amount of time.

A few months prior to the Arab attack, high-ranking officers and politicians expressed their skepticism about the possibility of the Arabs conducting an attack. Moshe Dayan commented that "The balance of forces is so much in our favor that it neutralizes the Arab considerations and motives for the immediate renewal of hostilities."³³ At about the same time, Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon said, "Egypt has no military option at all."³⁴ The Israeli leadership was so convinced of their military advantage

³² Janice Gross Stein, "Calculation, Miscalculation and Conventional Deterrence II: The View From Jerusalem," in **Psychology and Deterrence** by Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 66.

³³ Donald Neff, **Warriors Against Israel** (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1988), 123.

³⁴ Ibid.

that they decided to curtail the time of compulsory military service beginning in 1974.³⁵

The Arabs were also convinced that the Israelis had the military advantage. However, Sadat had decided to go to war despite the military balance for reasons that will be addressed later. This does not mean that Sadat had resigned himself to another Arab military defeat. On the contrary, the Egyptians decided to tailor their military objectives to take advantage of their relative strengths and the IDF's relative weaknesses in a limited campaign.

Egyptian planners evaluated that Israel had two critical advantages: a far superior air force and armored corps. Israel also had in their estimation the following disadvantages:

1. Long frontiers on four Arab countries and long lines of communications;
2. A small population with reliance on mobilized reserves for a specific threat—once reserves called up, Israel would face economic crisis the longer the conflict was prolonged;
3. Israeli overconfidence in ability of the military imbalance to deter aggression—the Arabs would not

³⁵ Ibid.

dare attack because of the disparity in air power.³⁶

The Egyptian military had some distinct advantages that military planners wanted to exploit and disadvantages that they desired to hide. The advantages included a huge population for staying power in a prolonged conflict and an army that was already organized for defense with superior air defense assets. Disadvantages included a weak air force and an army that could not compete with the Israelis in a war of maneuver.

The Egyptian military planners decided to conduct a limited offensive to seize the terrain just beyond the canal and then assume a defensive posture. This would accomplish two objectives. The first was to nullify the effects of the Israeli Air Force by staying under SAM cover throughout the operation. The second was to reduce the effectiveness of the Israeli armor corps. The Israelis would not be able to use their superior maneuver skills to envelop the Egyptians unless they took the time to do a crossing of the Suez, something for which the Egyptians failed to plan adequately. The Egyptians figured that the Israelis would have to attack the teeth of the Egyptian defense. This type of battle would lead to a protracted

³⁶ Safran, 279-80.

conflict and bleed the Israeli population in another war of attrition.³⁷

The trick for the Egyptian military was to cross the Suez and implement the plan without the Israelis having time to mobilize their reserves. Egyptian strategists cleverly achieved this feat by desensitizing Israeli intelligence over the course of a year. Sadat maintained throughout the time period that Egypt was preparing for war while simultaneously conducting a disinformation campaign in the Western press. Reports continued to appear that the Egyptian army was in serious trouble in the areas of maintenance, training, and morale and that military leaders were against an attack due to air inadequacies. These reports reinforced Israeli perceptions that their deterrence posture solely underwritten by their military power guaranteed the security of the state at least until the Arabs made significant gains in the air.³⁸ As far as Sadat's proclaimed intention to go to war, the Israelis dismissed it throughout 1973 because of the military

³⁷ Marshall D. Shulman, Kenneth Hunt, and Sydney D. Bailey, "Strategic Forum: The Middle East Conflict 1973," in **From Wars Toward Peace in the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1969-1993**, ed. Ian S. Lustick (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1994), 334.

³⁸ Stein, 67.

imbalance and their memory of him crying "wolf" in 1971-- his proclaimed "Year of Decision".³⁹

The Egyptians and the Syrians also desensitized Israeli intelligence by conducting large-scale maneuvers in the vicinity of their respective borders. The Israelis responded in the late spring to the first of these maneuvers with a partial mobilization and then lamented the \$11 million dollars that they had spent for it.⁴⁰ Exercises continued into the summer and the fall. The Egyptians and the Syrians also scheduled large-scale exercises during the first week of October.⁴¹ The Israelis accepted that these were ordinary exercises despite their being simultaneous. By the time the Israelis became aware that these exercises were really cover for the Arab armies to move into attack positions, they had insufficient time to mobilize.

Balance of Interests

The declaration of "No's" issued by the Arabs at the Khartoum summit effectively nullified any vestige of an Israeli inclination to abide by UN Resolution 242. Until the Arabs were willing to sue for peace, the Israelis would occupy the territories and enjoy the security benefits

³⁹ Neff, 123.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

provided by their newly acquired strategic depth. As time passed, the Labor government allowed settlement within the occupied lands--ostensibly for security enhancement.

The Israelis failed to appreciate the dire straits in which the Arabs perceived their intolerable situation. Sadat, in particular, felt that the attempt at diplomacy had failed and that the passage of time would only increase the military imbalance. The logical conclusion to his perception was that the Israelis would continue to integrate the occupied territories into Israel proper. Thus, the Israelis would create facts on the ground that the Arabs would have measurably less ability to change through diplomacy or force in the future when compared to the present. In Sadat's mind, the negative consequences of inaction outweighed those of action.

The Egyptian domestic situation was in a deplorable state. The country was impoverished economically and the population was showing signs of strain due to Egypt's failure to recover the Sinai. At the beginning of 1972, students conducted huge demonstrations, demanding war with Israel and expressing their disappointment that no action

⁴¹ Cordesman and Wagner, 22-29.

occurred during the "Year of Decision".⁴² The population was ready for something to happen and continued inaction would only decrease support for the Sadat regime.

Sadat had attempted to solve the Sinai problem diplomatically in 1971 and 1972. He proposed something that his predecessor, Nasser, had not--opening the door to possible negotiations with Israel. On 4 February 1971, Sadat announced in a speech to the National Assembly that Egypt was prepared to negotiate in accordance with UN Resolution 242. The US seized the opportunity to increase its regional influence. Secretary of State Rogers and his staff tried to work out an agreement between the two parties followed by Egypt repairing and reopening the canal. Successful completion of the partial agreement would be followed by negotiations in accordance with UN 242. The two sides could not, however, agree to the distance of the partial withdrawal nor to the composition of the Egyptian contingent which would cross the canal. Sadat was extremely disappointed in the lackluster efforts of the US State Department. He had taken significant political (and possibly bodily) risks to even engage in such a venture and felt that the Israelis did not make

⁴² Shaheen Ayubi, **Nasser and Sadat: Decision Making and Foreign Policy (1970-1972)** (Wakefield, NH: Longwood

concessions to him because of his military's weakness. Sadat did make one determination from the failed proceedings: the State Department did not hold the real power to conduct foreign policy. Egypt, if it was to make any progress towards its objective through diplomatic channels, would have to convince President Nixon's NSC advisor, Kissinger, that meeting Egypt's demands were in the US's regional and global interests.⁴³

Sadat was also frustrated with Egypt's superpower patron, the USSR. The Soviets constantly held up shipments of arms to Egypt and wanted to control how these arms were to be used. They worried about giving the Egyptians offensive weapons that Egypt would likely use in an attack on Israel. The USSR preferred that the Egyptians remain defensively armed which would provide a deterrent against an Israeli attack and encourage Egypt to continue to pursue a resolution through diplomacy. The Soviets were more concerned with the emerging détente with the US than the territorial concerns of their client. They even offered arms to the Egyptians in early 1972 except that the credit terms were outrageous. The Soviet ploy was designed to provide the Kremlin with leverage to pressure the US to

Academic, 1992), 65.

encourage its client to pursue a settlement. It was also intended to restrain Egypt from seeking a military solution because it was too impoverished to afford the offensive weaponry.⁴⁴

The Egyptians were shocked and outraged by their patron's offer but continued to negotiate into the spring. Finally, Sadat went to Moscow in May and the Soviets acquiesced to the Egyptian arms demands on favorable credit terms.⁴⁵ The Soviets consented, in part, because some of the wealthy, reactionary Arab states offered to pay for the weaponry--something for which the Soviets were unprepared.⁴⁶ However, by the summer, the initial euphoria quickly dissipated when the Soviets demonstrated reluctance to deliver the arms at the agreed time. Sadat used their failure to evict the Soviet contingent out of Egypt.⁴⁷ He expected to play the superpowers against each other for Egypt's benefit. He calculated that the US would rush to fill the vacuum left by the Soviet departure to enhance its

⁴³ Mohamed Heikal, **The Road to Ramadan** (New York: Quadrangle, 1975), 116, 141.

⁴⁴ Richard D. Anderson, "Competitive Politics and Soviet Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1971-1972," in **Conflict Management in the Middle East**, ed. Steven L. Spiegel (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 243-4.

⁴⁵ Lt. General Saad el Shazly, **The Crossing of the Suez** (San Francisco: American Mideast Research, 1980), 137-144.

⁴⁶ Anderson, 243.

⁴⁷ Ayubi, 70.

regional influence, or that the Soviets would relent to Egypt's demands. He would ask the US to solve Egypt's problem with the Sinai on terms more favorable to Egypt. However, Sadat's strategy backfired. The US made no gestures towards Egypt whatsoever. Kissinger explained why the US did not react to the expulsion by saying, "If he [Sadat] had come to me before this happened and told me about it, I should have felt obliged to give him something in exchange. But now I've got it all for nothing."⁴⁸

The Soviets pulled out without making any kind of counteroffer or pledge. Sadat was now isolated and the intolerable "no peace, no war" situation looked as if it would remain permanent. His perception was that the superpowers had decided at their May 1972 summit to freeze the Middle East situation. Israel had no incentive or coercive force that would encourage it to pursue peace. With no diplomatic option available and Sadat's perception that the future military imbalance would only increase to the detriment of the Arabs, Egypt only had one alternative to solve its problem—taking military action with the equipment that it had.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Heikel, 184.

⁴⁹ Mohamed Abdel Ghani El-Gamasy, **The October War** (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1993), 149–50.

Discussions between Kissenger and Muhammed Hafez

Ismail, the Egyptian NSC advisor, in early 1973 reinforced Egypt's decision to take military action. Kissenger stated:

"My advice to Sadat is to be realistic. We live in a world of facts and we can't build on hopes and fantasy. The fact is that you have been defeated so don't ask for a victor's spoils. There have to be concessions on your part so that America can help you...How is it possible, in your defeat, to impose conditions on the other party? Either **you can change the facts and consequently our perceptions will naturally change with regard to a solution**, or you can't change the facts, in which case solutions other than the ones you are offering will have to be found to suit your circumstances."⁵⁰

Kissinger followed this by warning Egypt not to attack because he felt that the Israelis would inflict a worse pummeling on Egypt. Another disastrous defeat would further weaken Sadat's negotiation position. However, he clearly told Sadat that the US's attitude towards the Egyptian position would change if they could create facts.

Balance of Resolve

Sadat's resolve to go to war hardened due to the hopelessness of achieving a diplomatic settlement. He modified his cabinet by appointing cabinet ministers who

⁵⁰ Ibid, 176.

would support his movement to war with little or no opposition. During the first cabinet meeting on 5 April, the cabinet, indeed, made that decision.⁵¹ This change of cabinet is reminiscent of the creation of the war cabinet in Israel just prior to launching the pre-emptive strike in 1967. The die was cast. War from this point was inevitable unless the other side (US and Israel) broke diplomatic ground. Sadat did not doubt Israel's resolve to fight which is why the Egyptian military planning was so deliberate and limited in scope.

The Israelis equated the weakness they perceived in the Egyptian military to the Egyptians' resolve to challenge the status quo. Some of the Israeli leaders did perceive that the Egyptians might possibly conduct a limited attack to negotiate in the diplomatic arena from a position of strength. They also realized the intense domestic pressure that was on the regime and understood its frustration over the "no war, no peace" situation. The expulsion of the Soviets was really an Egyptian appeal for help directed towards the US to convince the Nixon administration to search actively for a solution. The understanding of some Israeli leaders, however, virtually disappeared after the late spring mobilization in reaction

⁵¹ Ibid.

to Egypt's large-scale maneuvers. The dominant line of thought postulated that the Egyptians would continue to lack resolve until they obtained an improved air-to-air ratio. Although the Soviets had begun to rearm the Egyptians at an alarming rate with advanced equipment including aircraft, the Israelis believed that the new armaments would not properly be integrated until much later, thus delaying the time of inevitable conflict.⁵²

Although some had understood the Egyptian perception of its situation clearly, the Israelis failed to provide a credible deterrent. They made a critical error when they assessed that Israel's military superiority would prevent militarily inferior challengers from attacking, thereby dismissing the balances of resolve and interest from consideration. The Israelis assumed that the Egyptians would wait until they fixed their air deficiency to conduct an all out attack. They based their assumption on the simple cost/benefit utility calculation that a rational actor makes in his decision to attack or not. However, an all out attack to seize the entire Sinai was not essential to change the status quo. Sadat clearly limited the operation to minimize loss in the Egyptian armed forces. He needed to create a fact that would compel Kissinger to

⁵² Stein, 66-68.

modify the US perceptions of a settlement and then for the US to encourage its client to do likewise.

Sadat violates the theory's description of the rational actor. Had he done the cost/benefit calculation in accordance with the theory, then he should not have attacked. Since he did attack, Sadat is therefore, by default, irrational. However, I reject this notion because the Egyptian leadership evaluated their forces, tailored a military campaign to most effectively use those forces, and created a plan to achieve victory with those forces.

He did declare that he expected the status quo to become worse, so attacking in the present was preferable. This might indicate a willingness to settle for a sub-zero utility. This negative utility would not be as great if he postponed the operation or decided to settle for the status quo. However, the detail of the attack plan indicates something else. Sadat expected a small positive military utility that would later translate into a larger net gain in the diplomatic battle to follow. That he did not achieve a military gain without US intervention is of no consequence. The Egyptians were clearly winning during the first few days of the battle. They made some faulty tactical assumptions which Israel was able to exploit later with the timely arrival of US arms shipments to Israel.

Sadat had every intention prior to initiation of hostilities to win the limited campaign in order to improve his diplomatic strength in future negotiations.

The lesson here is clear. Military superiority did not limit the options available to the challenger. The challenger decided that he did not like the options with which he was presented. Domestic pressures as well as his prestige and credibility were at stake. Sadat decided to modify the exogenous options available to him in order to achieve a limited military outcome in his favor. The battle was much larger than the force of arms. Sadat's decision, despite not being without its risks, was purely in the tradition of Clausewitz's famous maxim of war being an extension of politics by other means. More importantly, Sadat was rational to attack despite the military imbalance.

1991

The threat to Israel changed greatly after 1973. It made peace with its most serious adversary, Egypt. The loss of Egypt from the Arab front against Israel had serious repercussions for the other Arab states. During the 1967 and 1973 Wars, Egypt had been the center around

which they coalesced once it decided to confront Israel directly. After the peace process commenced, the Arab nation was without its center. Different Arab leaders vied for the coveted position of regional interlocutor and representative of the Arab nation. They did not, however, have much success outside their own borders where their power was virtually absolute.

Israel's security concern began to focus more on the Palestinians and the different organizations which fought for their hearts and minds. Israel considered its only serious regional state threat to come from Syria. Syria, however, was not able to mount an all-out challenge against Israel by itself. Rabin claimed, and I believe rightfully so, that Israel's deterrence posture has maintained its security vis-à-vis Syria.⁵³ This was sufficient for Hafez al-Asad but another regional power, Iraq, was developing in the late 1970's and into the 1980's.

Iraq used its massive oil revenues to construct a huge army and fought a long war against Iran. Iraq claimed that it was protecting the Arab nation from its ancient enemies to the East. It used this situation to further its claim to leadership of all Arabs. The other Arab states still did not trust this Ba'ath regime and did not rally around

it the way it thought that they should have. Iraq demanded monetary compensation from what it considered the "freeriders" who were protected by Iraqi armed forces during the Iran-Iraq War. Finally frustrated with Kuwait for not compensating them with what they considered their due, Iraq invaded. The US constructed a coalition to forcibly remove Iraq and commenced air operations January 16, 1991.

In an attempt to sow dissension within the coalition, Saddam Hussein bombed Israeli population areas. Saddam calculated that Israel would respond and the Arab members of the coalition would leave it. In his estimation, they could not withstand the domestic uproar that would develop if Arabs were fighting alongside Israelis against other Arabs. This case differs significantly from the others presented because Israel was only peripherally involved. The Israeli deterrence posture failed in this case because it was credible.

Balance of Forces

The Iraqis had suffered terribly from the coalition bombing campaign although considerable concern still existed on the coalition side about conducting the ground

⁵³ Rabin, 9.

phase of the war. The Iraqi ground forces still constituted a sizable force that was well-entrenched in defensive positions. His forces, however, had suffered a considerable pounding as a result of the coalition campaign while the enemy waited for the most part unmolested. Saddam Hussein, for other interests which will be discussed later, considered that the retaliatory capacity of the Israelis, while substantial, could not be worse than the forces that he already faced. Saddam's cost/benefit utility calculation was geared to cost minimization rather than gain maximization. If he could disrupt the unity of effort in the coalition forces, then he would face Israeli aerial retaliation. Iraq would suffer damage from the IAF but it would probably be less than what it was receiving already.

Had the US not exerted pressure and offered incentives to Israel, the Israelis probably would have retaliated by air and accomplished the political objective that Saddam had planned for them. It is doubtful that the Israelis would have mounted a ground offensive for a variety of tactical and strategic reasons. That Iraq was not adjacent to Israel entailed a long logistical trail through possible enemy territory to support such an offensive. Politically,

a ground offensive ran the risks of turning the war into an Arab-Israeli conflict.

Some analysts have concluded that the Iraqis did not mount chemical warheads on the SCUD missiles because of a possible Israeli nuclear response. These persons believe that the ambiguous nuclear posture served as a deterrent to these types of weapons.⁵⁴ The Israelis, however, had taken extensive measures in civil defense to prepare the population for a possible chemical strike. If Iraq had used chemicals against the Israelis, then the weapons would have produced limited numbers of casualties.

Israel would not have responded to a chemical attack with nuclear weapons. Israel has maintained an ambiguous nuclear posture since the early 1970's when many experts believe they developed the capability. Israel would not have exposed their "bomb in the basement" to international scrutiny unless the circumstances indeed threatened the survival of the state. Since an Iraqi attack would not threaten the very existence the state, Israel would not play their nuclear card.

The more plausible explanation for Iraq's reticence was fear of an expansion in the US war aims. Instead of

uprooting Iraq out of Kuwait, Bush and his advisors would have changed the objective to overthrowing the regime. Indeed, the US issued a deterrence threat to Saddam that firing chemical weapons would result in the most dire consequences for his regime.⁵⁵ Far better to suffer international condemnation for his brash SCUD campaign against Israel than to be overthrown with further personal repercussions to follow at the Hague for war crimes, or death.

Balance of Interests

Saddam's interests were very clear in bombing Israel. His objectives were twofold. First, he wanted to divide the coalition that the US had constructed against him. He hoped to create domestic dissent among the Arab coalition members. If the domestic pressure rose to an intolerable level, then these members might reprioritize their commitments and leave the US led coalition. Second, he desired to acquire the status of regional interlocutor and representative of the Arab nationalist core values—Arab unity, anti-imperialism, and anti-Zionism.

⁵⁴ Shai Feldman, "Israeli Deterrence in the Gulf War," in **War in the Gulf: Implications for Israel**, ed. Joseph Alpher. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 204.

⁵⁵ Evron, 213.

Saddam had nothing to lose firing the conventional missiles against Israel. He was already a pariah for the actions he had already taken so he was not concerned about damaging his regional or international standing. His standing could only worsen if he fired something that was non-conventional. If Israel retaliated, then he probably would have made some progress towards his objectives. Since Israel did not retaliate, he suffered the same humiliating (but not completely debilitating) defeat that he would have, had he not fired.

The Israeli interest in this war was to remain in the background and allow the US led coalition to inflict a defeat on Israel's most capable enemy in the region. Any Israeli retaliation would have caused dissention within the coalition despite the Arab members expressing their understanding that Israel had cause to retaliate. The effect that Israelis fighting in concert with Arab forces against an Arab country would have caused shockwaves throughout the domestic populations of the Arab coalition members. Yitzhak Rabin commented, "We should not respond automatically to an Iraqi missile strike against Israel. Rather, we should consider our steps carefully, so that we

do not fall into the trap which Saddam Hussein is preparing for us."⁵⁶

Balance of Resolve

Saddam Hussein did not doubt the Israeli resolve to follow through its threat with force. Historically, Israel has shown the willingness to respond to challengers of its deterrence posture. Israeli deterrence strategy failed to provide the security for its citizens in this situation precisely because Saddam perceived that the Israelis would respond despite US efforts to restrain them. Indeed, Israeli leaders reinforced his perception by issuing threats designed to deter him from launching SCUDs. There was some ambiguity pertaining to how the Israelis would respond to a chemical strike, but no question that they would respond.

Saddam did doubt the US resolve to continue with the conflict if the coalition broke apart. Israeli resolve to retaliate was a key miscalculation for Saddam although he suffered no consequences for it.

Israeli deterrence strategy, in a bizarre paradox, failed because it was credible. The Gulf conflict also brought forth security concerns for Israel's future. This

⁵⁶ Feldman, 196.

was the first time since 1948 that the Arabs had struck the civilian homefront and the first time that Israel received fire from a non-adjacent adversary.⁵⁷

Technology has reduced the security value of the occupied territories. The strategic depth that these lands provided in the past is virtually non-existent against a ballistic missile attack.⁵⁸ President Bush articulated this concept after the Gulf conflict saying, "We've learned in the modern age, geography cannot guarantee security."⁵⁹ The Israeli leaders heading into the 21st century must understand this concept in the context of the inevitable proliferation of nuclear technology into the region. The concept of deterrence in a proliferated area changes as well.

⁵⁷ Ze'ev Schiff, "Israel After the War," in **The Conflict with the Arabs in Israel: Politics and Society**, ed. Ian Lustick (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1994), 199.

⁵⁸ Yaron Ezrahi, **Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel** (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), 202.

⁵⁹ Dore Gold, "The Gulf Crisis and US-Israel Relations," in **War in the Gulf: Implications for Israel**, ed. Joseph Alpher. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 74.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

This essay has been very critical of Israeli reliance upon application of the "weak version" of rational deterrence theory to guarantee Israel's security. I have attempted to disabuse those who are attracted to the theory as a virtual panacea for security concerns. Wholesale application of a theory in which real world variables are excluded or "temporarily suspended" is a precarious substitute for a comprehensive security policy.

The debate between the rational deterrence theorists and their detractors discussed the utility of the theory for policy formulation. The detractors made several key points that illuminated the shortcomings inherent in the theory. Some of them, however, not only question its viability for policy prescription but advocate that it is useless in policy formulation. This is an argument to the extreme, which I believe fails to acknowledge that deterrence has, indeed, been somewhat successful. For Israel, the military balance has deterred challengers from initiating an all-out conflict and has, until this decade, preserved the territorial integrity of Israel proper from state-level enemies.

The Israeli government is not, nor has been, monolithic in support of a security policy that overwhelmingly relies on force or the threat of it. In the second chapter, the genesis of a coherent Israeli security policy, wholly underpinned by deterrence, was traced back to the 1950's. An internal struggle occurred between the "political school" represented by Moshe Sharett and the "military school" represented by David Ben-Gurion. The security philosophy of Ben-Gurion emerged victorious and developed without a complementary evolution of regional diplomacy. Ben-Gurion's security strategy remained more or less constant without a serious internal challenge until the occurrence of the Intifada.

This does not mean that Israel failed to conduct diplomacy. It focused its diplomatic effort mainly, however, on cultivating its relationship with its superpower patron to the virtual exclusion of its regional adversaries. Israel was extremely reluctant to make concessions to the defeated Arab states and expected them to sue for peace.

Without meaningful diplomatic exchanges, the adversaries in this conflict have never been able to normalize communications. Even though Israel and Egypt signed a peace agreement, there is little more than the

realization of a demilitarized agreement between them. Camp David failed to produce a peace which would grow into a normal state-to-state relationship. Without the development of normal communications, adversaries are likely to continue to misperceive the intentions of the other and are unable to empathize with their adversary's position.

In an atmosphere pervaded by hostile communication and misperception, Israeli deterrence strategy has failed to deter all challenges. The third chapter discussed state level challenges to Israeli deterrence strategy. Nasser's objective in 1967 was to reestablish himself as the regional interlocutor and chief representative of the Arab nation. In 1973, Sadat could no longer tolerate a status quo that would perpetuate Israeli occupation of the Sinai. Frustrated with diplomatic stagnation, he calculated that he could only change the status quo by achieving a fait accompli. In 1991, Hussein launched his SCUD's at Israel to sow dissension within a coalition that was inflicting a crushing military defeat. He also used the situation to rally support in the Arab world to recognize him as the chief representative of Arab nationalism.

In all three scenarios, there was a compelling need by the challengers to attack Israel either despite, or in

complete disregard of the military balance. The balances of interests and resolve were determinant in these cases of deterrence failure. I do not mean to imply that Israel could have pursued strategies other than deterrence in the moments of crisis in 1967 and 1991. The failure is not in the moments of crisis in these cases, but in the failure to reach diplomatic solutions with the Arabs in times of non-crisis. The 1973 situation differs considerably in that Israel could have prevented war had it taken diplomatic steps to address the Egyptian interests.

Besides these challenges from sovereign states, there have been others initiated by sub-national groups like the PLO until 1988, Hizbollah, Hamas, and fedayeen guerillas. Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Israeli use of force to guarantee security has resulted from the Intifada. The uprising in the occupied territories has caused considerable reflection about Israeli security policy among Israelis. Yaron Ezrahi, commenting about Israeli measures to curtail the Intifada, noted that "we learned yet another lesson about the empty rhetoric of the spokespersons of imperial Israel, and the risks of replacing rather than backing diplomacy by force."¹ The Labor party has maintained a possible land for peace formula although its

previous efforts to pursue this goal were lackluster at best until the Intifada. The Likud has been more recalcitrant in its posture to keep the territories and limit the Palestinians' degree of autonomy. It has also displayed reluctance to abide by withdrawal agreements which has stifled further progress in the peace process.

A preponderant reliance on force and deterrence strategy has contributed to a regional environment that is in a more or less constant state of tension. In the absence of diplomatic initiatives or progress, this hostility has been allowed to fester and erupts periodically. Israel is unable to construct a credible deterrent in an environment in which the needs of the challengers are rarely addressed and hostile communication is the norm.

I do not mean to imply that Israel is fully culpable for the existing regional hostility nor that its regional challengers are justified for pursuing violent or provocative strategies to achieve their goals. Assigning blame has not been the object of this exercise. It has been, rather, to portray the inadequacy of strict reliance on force and deterrence strategy to guarantee security. Deterrence can only be truly effective when used in concert

¹ Ezrahi, 203.

with other strategies, such as reassurance. It is an effective component but not a substitute for security policy. It does not solve the root causes of the hostility and is good only as a measure to prevent attack.

The decade of the 1990's had an auspicious beginning following the Gulf conflict. Many saw the Arab participation in the US constructed coalition as a promising indicator that peace was possible between more of the Arab states and Israel. However, the euphoria that arose surrounding the Oslo Accords has waned in the intervening years. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the election of a Likud led government, and stalling by that government to abide by agreements with the Palestinians has soured the prospects for peace. Without the conclusion of some type of peace agreement, the hostile atmosphere in the Middle East is likely to become more so. Israel will likely resume a security policy that relies on deterrence and force. Unfortunately, the prospects for this policy to succeed in the future are even less than in the past.

There is a significant development that may weaken Israel's deterrence posture. It is the specter of a nuclear Middle East. The question surrounding nuclear proliferation is not if or when but how soon will it occur? Saddam's use of ballistic missiles against Israeli

population centers was an ominous portent of the future. Currently, Israel is very concerned with the transfer of Russian and Chinese ballistic missile technology to Iran. These transfers combined with Iranian research to develop an indigenous nuclear capability (again with Russian assistance) constitutes a serious threat to regional security. Iran is years away from producing fissile materials, however, near-term acquisition of fissile materials on the black market is a very real possibility.

Iran will be able to slash the time to obtain a nuclear weapon capability by these acquisitions. There are already six known incidents of the sale of fissile materials on the black market. All the materials came from Russia via nuclear insiders who used to be privileged workers in the Soviet system and are now impoverished intelligentsia in the new Russia.² What adds to this alarming fact is that Russia does not possess an inventory system for its fissile materials. There is no way of knowing how much fissile material has been stolen.³

² Oleg Bukharin and William Potter, "Potatoes Were Guarded Better," **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists** 51 (May/June 1995): 49.

³ Graham T. Allison, Owen R. Cote, Jr., Richard A. Falkenrath, and Steven E. Miller, **Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Material** (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 11.

With regards to weapon development, US weapon designers believe that most states or terrorist organizations have the knowledge to construct a nuclear weapon provided they obtain the fissile material. John Foster, the former director of the Lawrence Livermore nuclear weapons laboratory said that "the only difficult thing about making a fission bomb of some sort is the preparation of a supply of fissile material of adequate purity; the design of the bomb itself is relatively easy."⁴ Considering this statement and the availability of fissile materials for purchase, a nuclear Middle East is a near-term probability.

A nuclear Middle East will not resemble the relatively stable Cold War nuclear environment. The relationship between the adversaries in the Middle East is very different than the one shared by the Cold War protagonists. The US and the USSR had when fought together in World War II, were not geographically contiguous and had had normal relations during that war. The Arab countries and Israel share none of these characteristics. Inter-Arab rivalry may increase the level of hostility once nuclear technology proliferates in the region. We cannot assume that the

⁴ Ibid, 12.

Middle East actors will restrain their actions in the same manner as did the Cold War protagonists.

An even more harrowing possibility is the acquisition of fissile materials by sub-national groups. They would cast a variable into the nuclear dynamic which would prove impossible to control. At least the state system does lend itself to a degree of checks and balances that might allow deterrence to work. Sub-national groups are not under the same constraints as states and deterrence will have little to no effect on them. Policy-makers on all sides must work to reduce regional tension, thus lessening the incentive to take drastic action by these radical groups.

Israeli leaders also must concern themselves with the level of support they will receive from the US if Israel fails to make some concessions to the Palestinian side. The US-Israeli relationship has been based in part on Cold War Realpolitik. The relationship flowered because the US failed to engender Arab support to counter Soviet influence in the superpower battle for global hegemony. By default, the US could only rely upon Israel to check Soviet intentions in the region.

Now that the US is the only superpower left, it is not necessary to support Israeli reluctance to make concessions to the other side. Indeed, the Bush administration used

coercive tactics against the Shamir government after the Gulf War. Bush withheld loan guarantees from Israel because Shamir refused to halt settlement activity. The coercive diplomacy resulted in the downfall of the Likud government and the entrance of a Labor government which was much more conciliatory to the Palestinian position.⁵ I believe that we should expect to see similar US coercive pressure in the future to modify Israeli negotiating behavior.

This is not to say that the US will abandon Israel in time of need. The US is committed to Israel for political as well as cultural reasons. As long as it does not perceive an existential threat to Israel, the US will become more neutral towards the Arab-Israeli dispute. The extended deterrence that the US provides Israel will also weaken as the US becomes more neutral, thus reducing Israel's deterrence posture.

The idea that Israeli deterrence will become less formidable requires policy-makers to enhance Israeli security through other strategies. The peace process will enhance this goal. Strategic writers such as Louis René Beres consider these ideas to be dangerous for Israeli

⁵ Ben-Zvi, 202-203.

security.⁶ I, however, disagree with this assessment. Deterrence alone will fail to ensure security, if not through the designs of an adversarial state, then through the acts of sub-national groups. It is imperative that policy-makers work to solve the root problems of the regional hostility which will lead to a reduction in regional tension. Policy-makers must remove the kindling before a catalyst lights it on fire. I do not advocate that Israel rushes to conclude a peace agreement at any price. However, fulfillment of previously negotiated commitments to the Palestinians would reduce at least some of the regional tension. This is the direction I propose.

⁶ Louis René Beres, "Getting Beyond Nuclear Deterrence: Israel, Intelligence and False Hope." **International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence** 10 (Spring 1997): 90.

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